

Letter of Support for HF46/SF55 - Youth Restorative Practices Bill

Dear Members of the Minnesota State Legislature,

I am writing as a community member who has volunteered with the Yellow Medicine County Restorative Justice program for several years. We have been fortunate in our county to have a Restorative Justice program supporting youth in the juvenile justice system as well as families involved in child protection, substance use, truancy, and those transitioning in to or from the community.

Restorative practices allow youth and adults the opportunity to gain lifelong skills they will use to decrease risk of future contact with law enforcement, corrections, and child protection. People learn to identify and take responsibility for harm done, and build positive supportive relationships within their community. Some of the best Restorative Justice volunteers are youth and adults who were first participants in Restorative Justice circles and are now using their experiences to support others. This is a healthier trajectory for MN communities than current punitive options that separate rather than build community.

Passing HF46/SF55 will ensure this opportunity to communities statewide with the financial and technical support needed to implement successful restorative practices for MN youth and families.

Thank you for your consideration of this important bill.

Sincerely,

Mary Lee
Restorative Justice Volunteer
Yellow Medicine County